



Second Congregational Society  
Unitarian Universalist  
11 Orange Street - P. O. Box 1023  
Nantucket, MA 02554  
(508) 228-5466

## Nantucket Unitarian Universalist Newsletter - March 2016

### COMMON PATHWAYS \*

By Reverend Linda Simmons

### Eyes Need Eyes to Greet Them

Gary and I were on retreat for most of February at the Meher Baba Retreat Center in South Carolina. This Center rests on 500 acres of woods that touch the sea in Myrtle Beach. The little cabin we were offered sat right on a lake. Each morning the sun rose through the many windows that lined the bedroom, the kitchen and sitting room.

Meher Baba's philosophy is one many of us would find familiar. He tells us that as we live our lives- acting, thinking, reacting, believing- we develop what he calls *sanskaras* or patterns that form around us and influence our future actions and reactions. In order to break through these patterns, we must retreat from grasping, clinging, desiring and rest in equanimity within our lives. The clearest and easiest way to this attainment is love.

While Gary roamed around taking photographs, I spent many afternoons in our little cabin creating a world religion class that I will be offering this March (see announcement on page 2) on Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Unitarian and Universalism. We will be exploring how these religions relate to each other and major historical and economic movements. The text we will be reading together is Karen Armstrong's *The History of God*. I found these hours enchanting, walking through these pathways of history, dipping my imagination into the ways in which we as human beings have made sense of time, nature, mortality, power, authority, love- the ways in which we succeeded and failed in the great quest to live in harmony, to offer or refuse to offer what so many defined as *God's love* to each other.

In preparations for these afternoons, Gary and I would wake and stretch and do yoga in our sunny windows and then go for a light jog on the sprawling 500 acre property of the retreat center. We would return to our cabin, invigorated and filled with cool South Carolina mist, to our oatmeal and then meditate for twenty minutes. We ended our meditation by looking into each other's eyes for two minutes without speaking.

Of everything we did, together and apart, that last was the most trying and heart opening for me. Those last two minutes put me in touch with my limitations, judgments, deep love, fear, mortality, longing, and heart breaking recognition of self in another.

These were our days. And they did for us what Baba Meher, long dead now, had hoped they would, they put us in touch with our *sanskaras*, the patterns of our lives that we built or that were built around us, that make us who we are. And from that vantage point, we could glimpse the possibility of what life might be like through a wider lens.

I cannot say I have removed my *sanskaras*, but I can say that I know them a little better than when I left our dear island. And so I return to you my dear congregants, teachers, friends, companions- a little wiser, a little lighter and with eyes that were asked to see each day, if only for a few moments.

May our eyes find eyes to greet them that know the courage of staying a while, until we see ourselves reflected in the irises of another, one in one, perspective in perspective, dancing in the depths of another.



JOIN US AT 10:45 A.M.  
EVERY SUNDAY

**Sunday, March 6**  
**"Sacred Journey"**

Rev. Linda Simmons  
Hendrix Hall

**Sunday, March 13**  
**"Liberté, Égalité,  
Fraternité"**

Rev. Linda Simmons  
Hendrix Hall

**Sunday, March 20**  
**"Spiritual Journeys"**

Lay Led Service  
Hendrix Hall

**Sunday, March 27**  
**"Rebirthing Our  
American Vision"**

Rev. Linda Simmons  
Hendrix Hall

**Families Welcome!**  
**Religious Education  
for Children Every  
Sunday**

\*Nantucket is full of common pathways, some known by many, others known only by a few. Our Meeting House brings us together, traveling over many pathways, some common, some not, as we learn to walk with each other even when the ways are unfamiliar and unmarked.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

by Jan Ellsworth, Board of Trustees President

On February 16, 2016 the Board of Trustees held its first meeting of the new year. The 2016 Board members include: Rev. Linda, Jan Ellsworth, President; Val Hall, Vice President; Steve Estabrooks, Clerk; Cynthia Csabay; Lora Stewart; Joanna Greenfield; Clay Twombly; Joy Margolis; and Paul Stewart, Treasurer.

The February agenda included:

1. Monthly check in on the seven Unitarian Universalist principles. The members have the opportunity to reflect on how the principles have worked in their lives over the previous month.
2. Spring Board Retreat: to be held April 9, 2016 in the AR. The agenda for the retreat will include a discussion of Board priorities for 2016. Priorities from 2015 included focus on leadership development, beautification of the AR, and continue support of Grassroots Nantucket (now the 7<sup>th</sup> Principle Project).
3. Stewardship Workshop: by webinar on March 8, 2016 in the AR. Cost is free. All are invited.
4. St Patrick's fund raising dinner: March 11, 2016 in the AR. The Cost will be \$20 (Cost for kids is their age in \$). Menu will be a traditional St Patrick's Day feast (vegan options will be offered). All are welcome – sign up encouraged.
5. The Board will be providing coffee hour on one Sunday every month.
6. Activity Room (AR) renovations: the Board reviewed the progress so far and plans for the following were discussed,
  - Painting of the kitchen and AR (ceilings and walls)
  - Options for new lighting were reviewed
  - Options for Flooring renovations were discussed
  - At coffee hour on February 28, 2016 the color scheme and samples of carpeting and paint will be available for the congregation to see.

I welcome any and all recommendations and comments and can be reached at [ellsjan@verizon.net](mailto:ellsjan@verizon.net).

### **World Religion Class**

**Judaism, Christianity, Unitarian/Universalism & Islam**  
**Seven Mondays from 6 p.m. —7:30 p.m.**  
**March 14—April 25**

**Join Rev. Linda Simmons at the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House for this 7 week introductory course which looks at how these religions evolved in relation to each other and major economic and historical movements. Please obtain and be prepared to read short sections of and discuss Karen Armstrong's book A History of God: The 4,000 Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.**



*Our Friend Ruthie Grieder passed away on Saturday, February 27.*

*A Memorial Service in her honor will be held on Sunday, August 7 at 2 p.m. in the Sanctuary.*

*Photo courtesy of Beverly Hall Photography*

### **March Calendar of Events**

**Friday, March 4, 5 p.m.—6:30 p.m.**  
Spanish Conversational Group—Hendrix Hall

**Tuesday, March 8, 7 p.m.—9 p.m.**  
Stewardship Video Workshop—Hendrix Hall

**Friday, March 11, 5:30 p.m.—8 p.m.**  
St. Patrick's Day Dinner Fundraiser—Activities Room

**Monday, March 14, 6 p.m.—7:30 p.m.**  
World Religion Class—Activities Class

**Friday, March 18, 5 p.m.—6:30 p.m.**  
Spanish Conversational Group—Hendrix Hall

**Saturday, March 19, 4 p.m.—6 p.m.**  
Potluck with Faro de Luz—Activities Room

**Monday, March 21, 6 p.m.—7:30 p.m.**  
World Religion Class—Activities Room

**Monday, March 28, 6 p.m.—7:30 p.m.**  
World Religion Class—Activities Room

***In the February 2012 Weathervane, the following article by Debby Merritt was published.***

### **PASSING IT ON**

by Debby Merritt

Harold L. Pickett was minister of this church from 1930 to 1940. He also worked for the MSPCC in Brockton doing case-work. Because he was only able to be on the island on the weekends to do the sermons and some visitation, his daughter, Estelle P. Coggins and her young family lived in the parsonage. She attended to any parish work that needed attention during the week. She had learned much from her mother, Anita Trueman Pickett, who was also a Unitarian minister. ATP had the Barnstable church at this time. Sometimes, as needed, they exchanged pulpits for a weekend. This arrangement worked well for 10 years.



Estelle and her family moved to their own home on Prospect St (\$3000 for 6 bedroom home) in 1941. She continued to be involved in church work (many years Women's Alliance and tea and bullion after church).

After the war, when we returned to the island, Aunt Estelle was my Sunday School teacher. We learned "How Miracles Abound" and "The Church Across the Street" and had Christmas pageants. Our small choir traveled to Boston to sing at "May Meetings," the previous form of General Assembly.

My Girl Scout leader was also EPC. We learned about basket making from Mitchy Ray and Jose Reyes. There is a photo at the Lightship Basket Museum showing us in the Unitarian church kitchen with Mr. Reyes sitting around a long table. We learned many skills through badgework. I am conscious to this day that when setting the table, knives ALWAYS point in toward the plate.

After my sister, Anita, contracted polio in 1949, we moved off again to be near her hospital school in Canton, MA. I was still able to return to the island each summer and live with Aunt Estelle. She rented her extra rooms in the summer to working girls. I was able to spend a week after school got out at Star Island with the UU Youth Conference, and the rest of the summer working. I was lucky enough to have her continuity in my life for many years. She modeled "Service, Arts, Homemaking, and Family" I later married, became a mother, scout leader for many years and involved in the Medfield UU Church where we lived for 26 years (Choir, RE, Youth Group, Church Fair, "Prudential Committee" (BOT), Parish Committee, Search Committee, "Good as New Shop" and even Coffeehouse.) Later, when we returned to the island (part time 1986-1994, 1/2 time 1994-2002, and then full time in 2003), I've served in many ways at my Nantucket UU Church. It has been both rewarding and frustrating to try to measure up to the example Estelle Coggins showed me.

*Debby Merritt shared this story with the congregation during the January 2012 Fourth Sunday Lay Led Service, which was dedicated to mentors who have had a significant impact on our lives.*



*Our Friend Debby Merritt passed away on Friday, February 19.*

*A Memorial Service in her honor will be held on Saturday, May 21, at 2 p.m. in the Sanctuary. A reception will follow in the Activities Room.*

## **Potluck with Faro de Luz**

**Saturday, March 19th, 4 p.m.  
Activities Room**

**Bring a dish to share and come fellowship with our  
Friends from Faro de Luz!**

## **Stewardship 202 Relevant Faith-Filled 21st Century Practices**

**A video presentation by Mark Ewert, UU Consultant,  
the Stewardship for Us Team, and author of  
The Generosity Path**

**Let's think holistically about stewardship in our  
congregation!**

**Tuesday, March 8  
7pm- 9pm  
Hendrix Hall**

**Everyone is welcome!**

## **Sermons for March**

### **March 6: "Sacred Journey" - Rev. Linda Simmons**

We live our lives in search of something, something that makes sense that calls us beyond ourselves, into ourselves, that offers us more than ourselves. We all long to touch something and be made more whole through this experience: love, god, nature, beauty, human goodness. This sermon will ask: How can we encourage the happening of this experience more often and so satisfy this deep longing?

### **March 13: "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité"**

Are there universal values? Are we all inherently worthy of them? This sermon will explore what universal values and dignity mean in a world in which so many are treated as if they are conditional.

### **March 20: "Spiritual Journeys" - Lay Led**

Val Hall will lead a service that will continue the tradition of Spiritual Journeys. Those members of the congregation who will share their spiritual journeys will include Grace Noyes, David Hall, Dennis Simmons, and Val Hall.

### **March 27: "Rebirthing Our American Vision"**

In the ancient world, people believed that it was only by participating in divine life, a life of the unexplainable, that one became fully human. How do we become more fully human in this world? In this time of Equinox and rebirth, this sermon will explore our current political climate of polarization and extremes and seek a vision of us as Americans that calls us to our common humanity.

*We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:*

*~ The inherent worth and dignity of every person.*

*~ Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.*

*~ Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.*

*~ A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.*

*~ The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.*

*~ The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.*

*~ Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.*

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On Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Nantucket-Unitarian-Universalists-75824801619/](https://www.facebook.com/Nantucket-Unitarian-Universalists-75824801619/)

### **Church Staff**

**Rev. Linda Simmons, Minister ~ Edward B. Anderson, Minister Emeritus**

**Diane T. Lehman, Music Director ~ Lucretia Voigt, Office Manager ~ Jen Dunbar, Lead RE Teacher**

**Ed Sullivan, Sexton ~ Chuck Gieg, Bookkeeper**

### **Board of Trustees**

**Jan Ellsworth (President), Val Hall (Vice President), Paul Stewart (Treasurer), Steve Estabrooks (Clerk)**

**Cynthia Csabay, Joanna Greenfield, Joy Margolis, Clay Twombly, Lora Stewart**

**Rev. Linda Simmons (Minister)**

**Church Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - noon**

**Minister's Office Hours: Tuesday, 10 a.m. - noon and by appointment**